

OCBA board meeting

March. 15, 2017, Ocracoke Community Center

Minutes (approved by BOD June 12, 2017)

Called to order at 7:03

Board members attending: Connie Leinbach, Wayne Clark, Teresa O'Neal, Chip Stevens, Martha Garrish, Ashley Harrell and Helena Stevens. Several community members attended: Melinda Sutton, Bob Chestnut, Sundae Horn, Trudy Clark, Nancy Leach, Darlene Styron, Carol and Tom Pahl (arr. 7:45 p.m.). Bill Rich listened via speakerphone.

Connie called the meeting to order and gave a preamble as to what the OCBA board has been doing over the winter: engaging Magellan/Element, scrambling to complete the Walking Map and website (launched in February) and organizing Magellan's work, bylaws revision, bookkeeping revisions, looking into staffing scenarios.

Treasurer's report: Wayne reported on the ongoing bookkeeping reorganizing in light of the addition of a large influx to the bookkeeping for the branding/advertising, engaging a CPA for help (Chuck Saunders); preparing the Occupancy Tax grant request package; completing the website included having to spend an additional \$1,200.

Checking account: about \$50,000; a board-designated CD of about \$34,000, and Blackbeard's Pirate Jamboree cash-on-hand of about \$28,000. Upcoming obligations payment obligations include Magellan fees and normal business expenses.

Being the new treasurer, Wayne said we are still reorganizing the books and installing banking/bookkeeping protocols.

Publishing the Walking Map this year appears to be under budget on expenses and a few thousand dollars over budget on income. We filed the tax return and we're in good stead from an accounting standpoint.

Advertising/branding: Chip explained that we began almost a year ago starting with a detailed RFP; got responses from five agencies. We chose Magellan/Element and the Lou Hammond Group for presentations last August. Since 2007, the island's had major issues: a national recession, beach closures, ferry issues. Getting here got harder. We've all lost 25 to 30 percent in business. We don't know who our demographic is. Magellan began interviews with several stakeholders. Now they are working with the "brand architects" to formulate who our market targets are and where we should spend advertising dollars ultimately in a way that the member businesses can save money and the entire island can benefit. We have to find the folks who are willing to wait to get here.

Travel & Tourism Director report: Helena Stevens reported that the new Walking Map has been shipped from the printer to 92 locations and the rest will come to the island next week. Dare Distributing is helping.

New website: Launched in February. Site visits have gone up 118 percent. The increased traffic is because it's mobile friendly. 38 percent of that traffic is coming from mobile users. From October to December, there were 8,397 visits and from January to March there were 18,300 visits.

The delay in launching the new website was because pages were lacking that corresponded to banner purchasers' business categories. These had to be added at the extra expense mentioned above in the treasurer's report.

We're looking into purchasing newsletter software, such as Constant Contact, Mail Chimp or something else with which to communicate with our members, also an online means for members to pay dues/Walking Map fees and to do this in the summer season.

Helena will attend the VisitNC 36 conference this weekend.

Sundae Horn, former travel & tourism director, said she resigned the position last fall because the board told her not to launch the new website, which she said had been completed.

Bylaws: Connie explained that organizations should update their bylaws every several years and the OCBA is overdue. The revised bylaws will reflect that the board will manage the organization and there will be several special meetings throughout the year for "contributors."

Events: Martha Garrish reported that she and Teresa met with Sundae Horn, who will coordinate the July 4 and Fig Fest activities. July 3 will be the fireworks and July 4 the other traditional activities.

A discussion about whether the Fig Fest should be two days. Sundae said the Fig Fest evolved in 2014 when Hurricane Arthur caused the event to be canceled. So the OCBA decided to have an end of summer celebration with the Fig Cake Bakeoff on a Friday, which worked well for visitors in rental cottages.

The group agreed that the second day of the event boosted the overall cost by \$6,000 and all agreed it would be on Friday. People attending can be polled as to their day preference, and the bake-off may be moved to the OPS grounds.

Teresa O'Neal reported that the Boat Parade on Saturday of Thanksgiving weekend was a success with six boats and a nice crowd all around the harbor.

New business: Nancy Leach asked if the OCBA could sponsor Arts Week at the school for \$1,000. She said some prior funding sources had pulled out, although expenses hadn't changed. The board was reluctant to grant the request because the OCBA is not a fund-granting body.

A motion was made by Carol Pahl that the OCBA support Arts Week with a \$499 payment in March and the second payment of \$501 in April, seconded by Ashley Harrell. Motion approved and carried with one dissent.

Meeting adjourned at 8:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Connie Leinbach, secretary